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Congressional Call Talkers

8/25/15

Current Status

- EPA currently has deployed an estimated 164 employees and contractors for the response.
- The U.S. Coast Guard has provided 19 responders.
- There have been 20 different state and local agencies supporting response activities.
- EPA is committed to working closely with response agencies and state and local officials to ensure the safety of citizens, respond to concerns and to evaluate impact to water contaminated by the spill.
- The Gold King Mine is releasing water at the rate of approximately 552 gallons per minute.
- Water is captured and treated at a system of impoundments before being discharged to Cement Creek.
- As of August 24, EPA has collected a total of 397 private drinking water well samples; 211 surface water samples and 50 sediment samples.
- We have delivered 455,800 gallons of potable water and 141,980 gallons of livestock and agricultural water.
- There are no known water systems currently affected by the release.

New Mexico

- EPA continues to collect water quality samples from nine locations in the river near intakes for Aztec, Farmington, Lower Valley Water Users Association, Morning Star Water Supply System and the North Star Water User Association.

- We validated sampling data for the Animas and San Juan Rivers from the Northern Border of New Mexico to Navajo Nation collected from Aug. 7 to Aug. 14, 2015 has been released.

Navajo Nation

- On Monday, 384 bales of alfalfa were delivered to each of the Red Mesa, Aneth, and Shiprock Chapters. Feed will continue to be delivered to various Navajo chapters. EPA R9 has provided a total of 3,556 bales to date.

- EPA continues to arrange for hay deliveries for livestock on the Navajo Nation, to hold regular calls with tribal officials for sharing and evaluating water sampling data, and to provide other technical assistance to the tribe aimed at restoring San Juan River irrigation canal water for agricultural purposes. EPA is also engaging with the Navajo Nation regarding the federal claims process.

- Based on EPA surface water data collected, San Juan River water quality in the Navajo Nation has returned to pre-event conditions. This determination is based on a review of water quality data collected from August 7-16, 2015 at EPA's sampling point near Hogback, N.M. Data results from sediment samples taken from August 10-18 show that metal concentrations are below the risk-screening levels for recreation.

Arizona/Utah

- Surface water and sediment sampling has resumed today along the San Juan River on Navajo Nation and EPA contract personnel continue to conduct water and sediment sampling in Lake Powell.

General

- The Upper Animas Watershed, where the GKM is located, contains an estimated 400 abandoned and inactive mine sites.

- The Animas River and many of its tributaries have been historically impacted by high concentrations of heavy metals from both acid rock/mine drainage at these mine sites and from naturally occurring metal loading sources not impacted by mining.

- Water is captured and treated at a system of impoundments before being discharged to Cement Creek.

- All drinking water systems with intakes on the river – were able to close intakes before the spill reached their intakes. All systems have reopened. Currently – only Navajo Nation has not lifted its closure of the river for use.

- Water quality and sediment data is available online.

- EPA released the GKM work plan, the Site Health and Safety Plan and the EPA Task Order.

Path Forward

- EPA and the states/Tribes are developing a long-term plan for water quality monitoring.

- The DOI will analyze and conduct an independent review of the incident.

- Also, EPA's internal technical examination of the incident that has now started will give us a better understanding of the incident.

- Additional work is needed to ensure there are no more blockages holding back water that could contribute to future surges of contaminated water.

- Our work includes improving site access, stabilizing the mine structure, controlling water and metal precipitate, and treating surge water as necessary.

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